Electronic Telephone Exchanges in the Country

†*227. SHRI RAMJI LAL: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) the total number of electronic and other types of Telephone Exchanges in the country till date;

(b) by when all the Exchanges are likely to be converted into Electronic Exchanges;

(c) the number of villages where telephone facility was available and villages where this facility was not available as on 31st October, 1999; and

(d) the steps taken by Government to clear the waiting list in the villages?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN): (a) to (d) At present, 35523 electronic and 15 non-electronic exchanges are functioning in the country. All the non-electronic exchanges are likely to be converted into electronic exchanges by 31-03-2000. As on 31-10-1999, out of total number of 6,07,491 villages in the country, 3,44,508 villages have been provided with telephone facilities. 2,62,983 villages are not having telephone facility. To clear the waiting list in rural areas, new exchanges are being opened and the existing exchanges are being expanded.

Improvement in Post, Telegraph and Communications Services in Punjab

*228. SHRI LAJPAT RAI: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the inferior quality of essential services available in the field of Post, Telegraph and Communications in each District of Punjab;

(b) whether there is a need to improve the quality of these services; and

(c) if so, the instructions issued regarding improvement in Post, Telegraph and Communication services in Punjab circles?

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†Original notice of the Question was received in Hindi.